

## CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A method for a printer driver on a client machine to communicate with a network printer communicatively coupled to a print server, comprising the steps of:

5 searching a computer network for at least one printer accessible by the client machine;  
selecting at least one accessible printer located by an associated user;

retrieving the network address corresponding to the at least one accessible printer  
selected by the user;

storing the network address corresponding to the at least one selected accessible printer  
10 and a network path corresponding to the at least one selected accessible printer in an internal  
value table of the client machine; and

mapping a port from the at least one selected accessible printer to the client machine,  
wherein the printer driver of the client machine is able to pass through an actual port with the at  
least one selected accessible printer.

15 2. The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of downloading a printer  
driver from an associated print server.

3. The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of exporting a function to the  
20 printer driver.

4. The method of claim 1, wherein the network address is an Internet Protocol  
address.

25 5. The method of claim 1, wherein the network address is a proprietary network  
protocol address.

6. The method of 5, wherein the proprietary network protocol is an Internetwork  
Packet Exchange protocol.

7. The method of claim 1, wherein the storing step further comprises storing an associated port name corresponding to the at least one selected accessible printer in an internal value table of the client machine.

5 8. A system for a printer driver on a client machine to communicate with a network printer communicatively coupled to a print server, comprising:

means adapted for searching a computer network for at least one printer accessible by the client machine;

means adapted for selecting at least one accessible printer located by an associated user;

10 means adapted for retrieving the network address corresponding to the at least one accessible printer selected by the user;

means adapted for storing the network address corresponding to the at least one selected accessible printer and a network path corresponding to the at least one selected accessible printer in an internal value table of the client machine; and

15 means adapted for mapping a port from the at least one selected accessible printer to the client machine, wherein the printer driver of the client machine is able to pass through an actual port with the at least one selected accessible printer.

9. The system of claim 8, further comprising means adapted for downloading an associated printer driver from a print server.

10. The system of claim 8, further comprising means adapted for exporting a function to the printer driver.

25 11. The system of claim 8, wherein the network address is an Internet Protocol address.

12. The system of claim 8, wherein the network address is a proprietary network protocol address.

13. The system of 12, wherein the proprietary network protocol is an Internetwork Packet Exchange protocol.

14. The system of claim 8, further comprising means adapted for storing an  
5 associated port name corresponding to the at least one selected accessible printer in an internal value table of the client machine.

15. A computer-implemented for a printer driver on a client machine to communicate  
with a network printer communicatively coupled to a print server, comprising the steps of:  
10 searching a computer network for at least one printer accessible by the client machine;  
retrieving the network address corresponding to at least one accessible printer selected by  
a user;  
storing the network address corresponding to the at least one selected accessible printer  
and a network path corresponding to the at least one selected accessible printer in an internal  
15 value table of the client machine; and  
mapping a port from the at least one selected accessible printer to the client machine,  
wherein the printer driver of the client machine is able to pass through an actual port with the at  
least one selected accessible printer.

16. The computer-implemented method of claim 15, further comprising the step of  
20 downloading a printer driver from a print server.

17. The computer-implemented method of claim 15, further comprising the step of  
exporting a function to the printer driver.

25 18. The computer-implemented method of claim 15, wherein the network address is  
an Internet Protocol address.

19. The computer-implemented method of claim 15, wherein the network address is a  
proprietary network protocol address.

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20. The computer-implemented method of 19, wherein the proprietary network protocol is an Internetwork Packet Exchange protocol.

21. The computer-implemented method of claim 15, wherein the storing step further comprises storing a port name corresponding to the at least one selected accessible printer in an internal value table of the client machine.

22. A computer-readable medium for a printer driver on a client machine to communicate with a network printer communicatively coupled to a print server, comprising:

means adapted for searching a computer network for at least one printer accessible by the client machine;

means adapted for selecting at least one accessible printer located by an associated user;

means adapted for retrieving the network address corresponding to the at least one accessible printer selected by the user;

means adapted for storing the network address corresponding to the at least one selected accessible printer and a network path corresponding to the at least one selected accessible printer in an internal value table of the client machine; and

means adapted for mapping a port from the at least one selected accessible printer to the client machine, wherein the printer driver of the client machine is able to pass through an actual port with the at least one selected accessible printer.

23. The computer-readable medium of claim 22, further comprising means adapted for downloading a printer driver from a print server.

24. The computer-readable medium of claim 22, further comprising means adapted for exporting a function to the printer driver.

25. The computer-readable medium of claim 22, wherein the network address is an Internet Protocol address.

26. The computer-readable medium of claim 22, wherein the network address is a proprietary network protocol address.

27. The computer-readable medium of 26, wherein the proprietary network protocol  
5 is an Internetwork Packet Exchange protocol.

28. The computer-readable medium of claim 22, further comprising means adapted for storing a port name corresponding to the at least one selected accessible printer in an internal value table of the client machine.

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